

REMARKS

The Applicant thanks the Examiner for the thorough examination of the application. No new matter is believed to be added to the application by this Amendment.

Status of the Claims

Claims 1, 3-17, 19 and 21, 24 and 25 are pending in the application. Allowable claims 22 and 23 have been cancelled and portions of their subject matter has been incorporated into independent claims 1 and 11, respectively.

Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) Based on Rudisill

Claims 1, 3-5, 7, 9-13, 17, 19 and 21 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being obvious over Rudisill (U. S. Patent 5,339,179) in view of Hiyama (U.S. Patent 6,104,454). Claims 6 and 14 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being obvious over Rudisill and Hiyama, as applied to claims 1, 3-5, 7, 9-13, 17, 19 and 21, and further in view of Ohara (U. S. Patent 5,844,720). Claims 8, 15 and 16 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being obvious over Rudisill and Hiyama, as applied to claims 1, 3-5, 7, 9-3, 17, 19 and 21, and further in view of Yokoyama (U. S. Patent 5,899,552). Claims 24 and 25 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being obvious over Rudisill and Hiyama, as applied to claims 1, 3-5, 7, 9-13, 17, 19 and 21, and further in view of Miyashita (U. S. Patent 6,011,602). Applicant respectfully traverses these rejections.

Allowable claims 22 and 23 have been cancelled and portions of their subject matter have been incorporated into independent claims 1 and 11, respectively. Claims 22 and 23 were free of the rejections based upon Rudisill, and claims 1 and 11 should therefore be in condition for allowance. Claims dependent upon independent claims 1 and 11 are patentable for at least the above reasons.

These rejections are accordingly overcome and withdrawal thereof is respectfully requested.

Information Disclosure Statement

Applicant thanks the Examiner for considering the information disclosure statement filed November 8, 2001, and for making the initialed PTO-1449 form of record in the application in the Office Action mailed November 29, 2002.

The Drawings

The Examiner is respectfully requested to indicate whether the drawing figures are acceptable in the next Official Action.

Prior Art

The prior art cited but not utilized by the Examiner indicates the status of the conventional art that the invention supercedes. Additional remarks are accordingly not necessary.

Foreign Priority

The Examiner has acknowledged foreign priority.

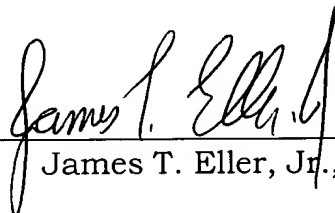
Conclusion

Should there be any outstanding matters that need to be resolved in the present application, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact Robert E. Goozner, Ph.D. (Reg. No. 42,593) at the telephone number of the undersigned below, to conduct an interview in an effort to expedite prosecution in connection with the present application.

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies, to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-2448 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16 or 1.17; particularly, extension of time fees.

Respectfully submitted,

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